



PAM SLATER-PRICE

SUPERVISOR, THIRD DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

October 19, 2009

Mr. Ken Wiseman
Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Office of the Secretary

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RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA

Dear Mr. Wiseman,

I appreciate the hard work of the Marine Life Protection Act's Blue Ribbon Task Force and Scientific Advisory Team. While I support the goals of resource protection, I wish to register concerns that proposed State Marine Reserves and State Marine Conservation Areas could impede beach restoration, inadvertently protect invasive species and threaten recreation.

I make my comments in three capacities: As Vice Chairwoman of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (my district includes the coast, from Pacific Beach through Encinitas); as chairwoman of the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority; and as chairwoman of the San Diego Association of Governments Shoreline Preservation Working Group.

Three cities within my district – Encinitas, Solana Beach and Del Mar – have commented upon draft proposals for the MLPA Initiative. I endorse the recommendations proffered and by each city and recognize their concerns, including:

- Possible impediments to beach-building and beach maintenance

The economies of coastal cities and the region depend upon tourism and beach visits. Through the years, our beaches have narrowed, and authorities are coordinating a second, regional sand replenishment project. We worry that "no take" provisions outlined in the proposed State Marine Reserves would apply to critical "borrow sites" used for sand mining off the shorelines of Del Mar and Encinitas. These sandy-bottomed stretches are rich with high-quality sand, which is pumped onto eroded beaches. In addition to proven economic benefits of wide beaches, studies have shown multiple species have benefited from artificial beach-building. Perhaps most importantly, wide beaches provide for the health and safety of people by providing a buffer between the surf and beachfront homes and fragile ocean bluffs.

- Possible restrictions to the dredging of lagoon mouths

Coastal lagoons depend upon tidal flushing to remain healthy. Natural sand migration and heavy surf often join forces and plug lagoon mouths. One lagoon in particular, San Dieguito, is prone to blockage. The same lagoon is in the midst of

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Cardiff

*Carmel
Mountain*

Carmel Valley

Del Mar

Del Mar Heights

Del Mar Mesa

Encinitas

Escondido

La Jolla

Leucadia

Mira Mesa

Navajo

Olivenhain

Pacific Beach

*Rancho
Bernardo*

*Rancho
Penasquitos*

Sabre Springs

San Carlos

Scripps Ranch

Solana Beach

Tierrasanta

Torrey Hills

Torrey Pines

a \$90 million restoration program. Studies have shown that great numbers of fish are spawning in the man-made basins created during the restoration project, as intended. For these and other fish, allowing the lagoon mouth to remain shut could invite disastrous consequences. A stagnant lagoon invites toxins and leads to fish-kills and mosquito breeding that present health risks for people.

- The creation of safe havens for invasive species

Under strict interpretations, a “no-take” zone would mean unwanted species could proliferate in the marine reserves and protected areas. Years ago, in Carlsbad, that city and resource agencies at all levels successfully defended Agua Hedionda Lagoon from an infestation of caulerpa taxifolia, or “killer algae.” The highly-invasive marine plant threatened to overwhelm the underwater ecosystem. Would the establishment of state marine reserves and conservation areas hamstring efforts to eradicate such dangerous plants? On the shorelines of coastal lagoons, the removal of Arundo donax, pampas grass, thistle and other invasive species is ongoing and very necessary.

- Threats to recreational assets

Cities and their lifeguard departments are not clear on what marine reserves and conservation areas would mean for swimming, surfing, surf-fishing, dog-walking, snorkeling and other recreational activities. Under strict interpretations of the Marine Life Protection Act, these activities could be seen as off-limits. Would kelp be allowed to be removed from the beach? Would lifeguard boats be allowed to launch from the beach and patrol the shoreline?

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Marine Life Protection Act. I am hopeful that the approval process will strike a balance between resource conservation and the recreational and public safety needs of people.

Sincerely,



PAM SLATER-PRICE

Vice Chairwoman

San Diego County Board of Supervisors

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